

THE  
THIRD REPORT  
OF THE  
MINISTER AT LARGE IN LOWELL  
TO THE  
LOWELL MISSIONARY SOCIETY,

JULY, 1847.

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## R E P O R T.

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THE Ministry at Large in Lowell has reached the third year of its existence with increased proofs of its usefulness, amid circumstances more favorable to the accomplishment of its various high objects, and settled, we trust, on a firmer basis of faith and hope. A year since, its foundations of temporal support were shaken. It was thought by some, that this noble fabric of charity must fall. The circle of those who started and sustained it was not deemed sufficient to meet its large expenses. The interest of all who had at heart the good of the city was concerned in its continuance. The owners of the mills paid a large portion of the taxes of the city; and they had always been ready to aid in the supply of its moral and religious wants. An appeal made to the corporations, and signed by all the agents and Ex-Mayor Huntington, as soon as it was laid before the Board of Treasurers, was promptly responded to, and notice given, with a strong expression of interest in the moral welfare of



Lowell, that a certain assessment on the capital stock of the factories was voted, and would immediately and annually be paid to uphold this mission, on condition that an equal sum should be contributed by the citizens. This act, though no more than a duty, was so cordially and handsomely performed, that it deserves a record, and the thanks of the friends of humanity. Its effect was most important on the great interests at stake. The clouds of fear which had gathered over this infant establishment were at once dispersed, and a bright day dawned upon it. With a new impulse, its guardians proceeded to provide for its present need and future growth. Pecuniary engagements were met; and the Hamilton Chapel was engaged for a term of years, and fitted up with the addition of an office, a school, a clothing-room, and a furniture-room, which the nature and success of our operations made indispensable. We could go on our career of philanthropy with confidence and rejoicing. We cannot be too thankful to an overruling Providence for our present condition and prospects.

The work of the ministry has been steadily performed by me the last year, with only a slight interruption from lameness. I dare not hope that my work has been done with perfect satisfaction to the community: for I am imperfect; and, in the situation in which I am placed, there is more than enough for one to do, even with the greatest devotion to duty, and a well-ordered system,—more than one can accomplish without the occasional omission of a duty, or a hasty performance of it.



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In presenting my third annual report, the nature and principles of this mission of love may be omitted, as they have been stated and unfolded in previous reports; and I see no occasion, after experience reflected upon, to alter what has been written. It will be expected of me, that I give to you and the public some idea of the operations of the ministry during the past year, — its plans of philanthropy, and the success attending them; the receipts and expenditures of the Poor's Purse, and some account of my visits among the poor and degraded; with such further knowledge and suggestions as to the causes and remedies of existing and prospective suffering, bodily and spiritual, as my position may authorize and my limits allow.

The Chapel has become the head-quarters of our operations. The Sunday services have been regularly performed by me, with only one exchange, since the commencement of my labors in this sphere. The chief reasons are, first, that my presence on the sabbath seems to be almost always required; and my particular knowledge of the wants of those who may attend my ministrations would seem to prepare me more suitably to serve them. Secondly, I have no desire for occasional exchanges, until time has elapsed to establish and prove an unsectarian character for our chapel; so that no Christian brother, of any name, may have need of apprehension, that, in standing in my pulpit, or in admitting me to his, he is giving sanction to any creed or party, but only to a pure and excellent charity. In this connection, I may observe



that appeals to sectarian prejudice and jealousy, or to common pride, to deter any person not gathered into any fold, disposed to come to this chapel, from attendance upon a place expressly designed for, and which furnishes peculiar advantages to, those in low circumstances, — generally uncared for and neglected, — are entirely unworthy of the discipleship of Him whose life, death, and epitaph were, “doing good” to the poor wanderer and greatest sinner, and who recognized no lines but those of humility, mercy, and righteousness.

The general attendance at the Chapel has increased the last year; and, since the renovation of the building, there is a marked increase in the self-respect and decorum of the worshippers. We are dependent more upon the outward than we are aware, to prepare the way for that which is addressed to the inner man. A family is often reached and elevated by simply inducing a regard for neatness. A child is more easily trained to good behavior, where every thing about it is in order, and cared for. I believe that the more air of cleanliness, comfort, order, and simple beauty is thrown over the Chapel and its grounds, the more of the poor will enter its walls, and the easier our high purposes will be carried out.

As I have remarked in a previous report, irregularity of attendance upon our sanctuary is characteristic of the congregation, and must continue to be. Comparisons cannot be drawn between a society of this nature and other societies composed of persons independent in their circumstances, and whose habits



of life are regular. An occasional visitor will find, at one time, few present; at another, the Chapel nearly filled. There is less difference in the number in attendance than there was a year since.

Again: the aspect of our Society does not show what is effected by this ministration, in drawing men, women, and children under the influence of the gospel; for many, who have not seen the inside of a church for years, are induced to enter our walls, who, after a while, either by the influence of jealous proselytes or of their own preference, for a variety of reasons, take their places as steady supporters or worshippers in other churches. It may be proper for me to add, that, in accordance with our plan, I have, on ascertaining the preference of any for a particular church, advised them, and been often successful in persuading them, to break up their habit of non-attendance, and form the habit of attendance upon that church. That we have been gathering our brethren into other churches, we will rejoice; for everywhere they hear Christ preached. Our object is accomplished. What is sometimes said, that "we will not help any unless they go to our church," is, of course, either an art of the unworthy beggar or a slander; as few, in comparison with the number assisted by me, ever see the inside of our Chapel. I often know better the wants of those who attend it; and, if any are found without any tie or preference for a particular place of worship, I seek to have them under my spiritual care, that I may, if possible, exert a continual moral influence over them adapted



to their case, and which is more likely to reach the heart, as it is the voice of him speaking whose hand has ministered to the body.

The Sunday school of the Chapel continues to afford the most gratifying evidence of the good that we are doing. Many children are the subjects of our instruction, who would otherwise grow up, not only without having broken to them the bread of life, but some instructed only in the worst lessons of depravity. We take them into our arms, and feed them as the lambs of Christ. The rudest spirits, their own masters, brought in wild from the streets, we expect to tame only by time and patience, and subdue to a knowledge of propriety and right only by "line upon line, precept upon precept; here a little, and there a little." We shall accomplish all that we may desire in but few cases. We shall, however, — for we see that we do, — plant in many a bosom ideas of truth and duty, to which, as we water, God is giving, and will give, the increase. To specify particular instances of improvement might be interesting, and give vividness to statement; but I refrain, out of regard to the effect upon the young, and because it is not the striking proofs upon which I wish the public mind to fix itself, but the general results, and the unseen and ultimate, which, faith and reason tell, will flow from devoted and persevering efforts, with a spirit of dependence upon Heaven.

More than two hundred children have received the benefit of our school the past year. The largest number belonging to our school, at one time, was in



the winter season, which enables us to bring within our doors many, in the summer season, disposed to go at large. In mid-winter, our number was one hundred and sixty. Nearly two-thirds were boys, — an unusual and happy fact. Many of our children are small, which, in the infancy of our establishment, we do not regret. Experience teaches, that, the earlier the young are brought under our control, the more power have we over the future man and woman.

The Sunday-school scholars have the privilege, not only of a library of religious reading, carefully selected from the unsectarian books of different denominations, but of a miscellaneous library of the best works for youth; which last, the past winter, has been constantly visited, and its volumes eagerly sought. The habit of reading has been suddenly formed with many who never had any taste for books; and the books have been nearly as much read by parents, or to the parents by the children, — a circle being formed at night around the fire, to listen to the simple, pleasing, and instructive tale, instead of to the vulgar story and the harsh notes of unsubdued and conflicting passions. With the words, "The Chapel books are good books," the family retire to a peaceful and happy rest. I know of one very violent old man, who, every night, was tamed down to the temper of a shorn lamb by this harp played upon by his young David.

The girls have also the benefit of a weekly sewing-school, which has been lately revived with a good attendance. This must be considered an important branch of usefulness, especially to a large class of our



pupils. It supplies a defect in our common schools. We do not limit its benefit to our own school. The children have the opportunity, too, of learning to sing. The same benevolent lady, who gave gratuitous instruction two years since, has, with the same generous kindness, opened another school for the profit and pleasure of our boys and girls, and such others as I may see fit to invite in. This opens a door of improvement and happiness shut against many.

These advantages which our Chapel, with an attempt to equalize the blessings of the day, offers to poor children, must produce the effect of elevating some of the families with which they are connected, and of securing to them a respectable standing in life, which, otherwise, they would never occupy. I might add also, that the respectable appearance which many now make in clean and tidy garments, rendering the outward appearance as beautiful as that of the sons and daughters of the rich, is owing to our plan of a clothing-room, which is kept supplied with every variety of dresses suited to all ages.

The clothing-room might receive a more extended notice. It is a depot for new and second-hand clothing, the gifts of the charitable. From it the persons of children and adults, the sick-room, and beds of indigent families, are supplied. From this source, about six hundred garments are annually given away, beside many articles loaned, some to be paid for at a future day. This is a saving to the poor of at least six hundred dollars, and probably double that sum. It is a form of charity little abused. Aided in this



way, many families need no other aid, their income being sufficient for other necessary expenses. Some endeavor to prevent worthy families, in straitened circumstances, from availing themselves of this charity by appeals to their pride ; but such appeals ought to bring the crimson of shame to their own cheeks instead. There are those who view the offer of this assistance rightly, — that it is a kindness to be simply received as such. To every contributor to our useful stores, thanks are due, but particularly to the Ladies' Charitable Society in the neighborhood of Pawtucket Falls, formed for this express purpose, which made up and sent to us, in the cold season, about one hundred new garments. The interest and heartiness with which the act was done gave it grace.

In the basement story of the Chapel, we have kept stored a quantity of second-hand stoves and furniture, to be loaned for a season to the needy, and especially to new-comers, until they could provide for themselves. In this same story, on the last Christmas, the friends of the Chapel spread a second feast of charity ; to which, after a religious service, the children and their parents were invited. It was a beautiful occasion ; and much food was left, purposely, to drop into the lap of the needy.

Last winter a lyceum was started at the Chapel. This had a triple object in view, — the diffusion of knowledge at a cheap rate, the adaptation of the subject and language to such an audience as was principally desired, and the collection of money for the charitable purposes of the Chapel. It was ex-



tremely gratifying to find many gentlemen perfectly willing, and even desirous, from the best feeling and principle, to aid in this experiment. Samuel L. Dana, M.D., Rev. Amos Blanchard, Rev. H. A. Miles, Rev. A. A. Miner, Rev. U. C. Burnap, Rev. Willard Child, Dr. A. H. Brown, Dr. I. Curtis, Mr. W. S. Schouler, of this city; Rev. C. F. Barnard and Rev. T. B. Fox, of the Warren-street Chapel, Boston; and Rev. S. G. Bulfinch, of Nashville, — made out, with one from myself, a course of fifteen lectures, which were well attended. The course was started late in the season; but the lectures, as a whole, were so well adapted and interesting, and the project met with so much favor, the experiment will be repeated.

Before leaving this division of my report, which relates to the Chapel, I would touch two more subjects. A lower room of the building has been opened for an *office*. Those who apply for charity, and those who wish to see me on business, are received here at specified hours, instead of at my house, as formerly, at all hours; insuring to me no time of rest, without which the springs of life will soon wear out. The office is open, as announced, three times a day, — from eight to nine, twelve to twelve and a half, four to five.

A portion of the basement-story of the Chapel has lately been rented for the purpose of an Infants' Home; an experiment not started by nor connected with our institution, and for the maintenance of which we are in no way responsible. But it has a kindred object: we could afford it more conveniences,



at a cheaper rate, than could be found elsewhere ; and we have submitted ourselves to some inconvenience to give what encouragement we could to its operations. The plan is not, I am sorry to say, rightly understood or fully appreciated. It is simply to open a room where mothers in straitened circumstances may leave their children, from one to four years of age, to be taken care of and instructed as they may bear, instead of locking them up in a room, or neglecting them, while they themselves seek support ; or thinking that their hands "are tied at home," and they have no resort but to beg. The mother now may earn her living with an easy and glad mind. She may even pay something for this care taken of her offspring, and have great occasion to bless her benefactors. This plan recommends itself as dictated by the kindest feeling ; as a wise and intelligent charity ; as calculated to raise up those that are bowed down, to diminish beggary, to aid through employment furnished, to improve the condition of neglected children, and help the cause of education in our primary schools. Something of the kind proposed has always seemed to me to be needed. An institution so excellent in itself, so well adapted to the wants of the poor, can need only a good system, good management, faith, and persevering efficiency, to bring upon it the hearty favor of the public, and the blessing of Heaven.

Although the Chapel is the head-quarters of the operations of the ministry, its chief labors are known to be about the streets and lanes of the city, where poverty and crime are to be found neglected, and



temporal and spiritual relief will be accepted. The same rules and views, specified in previous reports, continue to govern me in all applications for aid, and cases of want searched out. Instances of almost entire desertion by the world, and of extreme suffering, are discovered ; but they have diminished in number each year of service, as destitution sought out is seasonably known and relieved. Then certain, who will suffer rather than ask public alms, feel that they have a friend to whom they can come privately, and obtain temporary aid if they are worthy ; and there are those who, as soon as they hear that a brother or a sister is in need, report it for investigation. A sketch of some pictures of poverty might be given that would seem incredible, and move your deepest sympathies ; but, if presented at all, the ends of a wise charity would be better gained by a detail to the private ear than by public proclamation. There is less dependence, too, placed by us on feeling, and more on understanding and principle. Much aid has been extended to some families, while, in every part of the city, gifts of kind love have replenished the empty board of the domestic circle, as truly as if Heaven had sent an angel to minister to necessities in the hour of hard struggle and despondency.

The year just past has been one of such general prosperity ; the able and willing laborer has so readily found employment, and his reward has been so sure ; the man temporarily straitened has found his credit extend so much farther than usual, — there has been less frequent and less urgent call for assistance.



And there has not been so much sickness, with the exception of the ship-fever, as in the previous year. Still, from various causes, the poor we have always with us; and, in the midst of prosperity, the very high prices of the common articles of food has obliged me, particularly this spring, when the routine of labor has been disturbed by disease or accident, to make considerable demands on the Poor's Purse.

Not so many of one class come to me for aid as formerly; because I know them, and they know me. I know them better than those who have not had the opportunity of a thorough observation or long acquaintance; they know me, that I will not help support them in indolence and vice. The unworthy avoid me, and are sometimes angry at being referred to me. Sometimes they accuse me to others of hard-heartedness; and sometimes they affirm that they have received help from me, to induce others to give. A resolute decision on my part, a persistence in it, and a repeated word as to the cause of their poverty and the remedy in their own power, has led a number to drop begging, hunt up work, and use their means for their support. There are scores of those who will lean upon others as far as they can, and do little or nothing for themselves; or who will work only irregularly, and spend their substance in pleasure and dissipation, because some friendly rich people or tender-hearted female, touched by the pathos of their tale of distress, and ignorant of their history and of the ways of poverty, will give them clothes and bread. There is more than one score in



this city sustained in this way, whom it would be only charity to throw entirely on their own exertions, or let them suffer, according to the ordination of Providence, until they learn wisdom by experience ; pains being taken, at the same time, to convince of folly and the designs of love. It is gratifying to know that there has been here, of late, a considerable diminution of this begging and spirit of dependence ; and, farther, that many cases of worthy poverty, which neglected would have resulted in despondency and ultimate ruin, have, by timely aid and encouragment, been converted into comfort and an independent and happy enjoyment of life. This proves that the apprehension of some, that this ministry would nurse and increase poverty, was groundless. The tendency is manifestly all the other way.

There is a class of poor to which I should refer. From the same dictate of affection that the Irish send for all their relatives to come to this land of their adoption, many of the operatives in the mills send to their homes in the country for the whole family to come to the city, with a glowing description of how much better they can do here. The family comes ; the operative leaves the scrutiny and wholesome regulation of the boarding house "to board at home." The change from the country to the city induces sickness ; the father does not find regular work for a long time, or with an appetite for intoxicating liquor, temptations increased, now becomes intemperate ; the children, accustomed to roaming, are with difficulty kept in school, and learn in the streets impudence, theft, and every



thing that is bad. Debts are accumulating; wood is high, rents are high, the style of dress is high; the city church is different from the village church in its whole air and expense, and is not so inviting. The sabbath is soon broken. Dark clouds are gathering in the distance; trouble comes; it is a sad reality. The mother sighs, and wishes herself back to the country; the father will not go, and says that there is nothing to go with; the boys are ruined; the unsophisticated girls are entrapped into sin. The operative sees her mistake; the family are wretchedly poor; she is not willing to do more than pay her board, and finally leaves the care and support of the family to others. This is only one of a long list of similar cases. Many a family of the operative had better remain in the country, and the younger members only come here as they are wanted, to return to the country when their work is done.

Experience suggests several cautions with respect to alms-giving, which it becomes us all to heed: First, We must be sure that a tale of distress is true. Second, Ascertain whether the subjects of it are worthy of aid; if they are not worthy, whether the necessity of the case justifies aid to a certain extent, and in a certain way, that may benefit rather than injure. Third, Not help too abundantly, inclining the relieved to waste rather than frugality, and to the indulgence of deceitful expectations. Fourth, See from what different sources an individual is drawing, and whether there is not, in reality, an attempt to make gain out of suffering. One family, in real suffering, was detected, this last year, in obtaining help from the city, from a



charitable society, from the neighbors, from many known philanthropists, and from the stores, at the same time. Every one who visited the house of the family could see that bed-clothing and garments were wanting, while these were afterward found packed away in trunks by the dozens. Fifth, To be careful, in a majority of cases, not to continue aid after the necessity for it ceases, as this weakens the motive to exertion. Sixth, Omit no opportunity to show the poor how the slender means at their command may be used to go the farthest, and profit the most. What is enough for the comfortable subsistence of one family, is often a plea for begging and dependence with another having no more mouths to feed. To these rules it ought especially to be added, we should seek every opportunity to awaken in the bosom of the poor a trust in a good Providence, and a sense of accountability to him, and to cause to be seen and felt the intimate connection between virtue and common success in life. On this system, a benevolent person may not give so much as where a sudden gush of feeling is yielded to; but that given will accomplish vastly more good, and that which is withheld, no less.

Five thousand recorded visits have been made by me among the poor since I came to the city. More poverty and suffering are to be found than any one, who does not search it out, would suppose could possibly exist. It is impossible for one man to meet the wants of one-half who are crying for bread and spiritual food.

A great deal of poverty is owing to sin. It exists



after the cause is removed ; but there is a great difficulty in removing the cause, when one is settled in habits of iniquity. The secret of doing great good to man, will, I believe, be found in *prevention* rather than in cure ; in preventing the formation of bad, wasteful, and destructive habits ; in removing temptation, and in the inculcation of religious principle, especially in the bosom of the child. This we make the foundation of our faith and deed ; while, at the same time, we endeavor to do all in our power, with the aid of the Bible and the Holy Spirit, to convict, convert, and reform. But it cannot be disguised,—and it is the testimony of those who have had the charge of the prisons and reformatory institutions of our principal cities, expressed to me privately, upon inquiry,—that, notwithstanding tears, confessions, and professions ; notwithstanding the greatest apparent sincerity, and the most flattering belief and hopes,—a strength to resist temptation, and a steadfast adherence to virtuous desire, though sometimes, are but seldom, attained by those far sunk in depravity. There is a check put upon iniquity, and there is a successful influence for a season ; but a thorough, abiding reformation, or a restoration to former innocence and piety, is rare. This statement does not prove the efforts of mercy to be little worth ; for in the balance of God, who weighs virtue and souls, any exhibition of good life is invaluable, and one soul is worth more than the whole world. It only shows, that, to gain the great end of individual salvation and of general purity more surely and fully, the public mind must direct its attention more strongly



to other points. While some are lifted out of degraded poverty, and a few are reformed by this ministry, its chief utility and glory lies in its preventive plans and influences.

The sin which is the parent of nearly all the poverty in this land, and of much of the iniquity, is *intemperance*. It still continues its dreadful havoc among us. The ship-fever, or any plague numbering as many subjects, could not begin to work the mischief that this does. The trouble and moral desolation following it are awfully appalling. It is a horrible plague. Ask the afflicted wife and deserted mother. It is corrupting in the extreme. See its effects on the children! It is a deadly evil. Many a husband, this last year, has fallen a victim to its mortal blows, dying in the terrible agony of the delirium tremens, with only devils about him to fill his last hour with torment. And I have attended the death-bed of the wife, who declared that a broken constitution and a broken heart was caused by the habits of him whom she loved as her life. To the living, the cup drank is a cup of woe with the drinker, and of suffering with all who depend on him for support and happiness. This I have often witnessed; and the most beautiful and promising children I have seen made miserable and ruined through bad example and neglect. What must our opinion and the judgment of God be of him who, knowing the consequences, — and he must know them, — sells his brother the intoxicating cup for gain? Would it be unjust for the law of the land to oblige those who sell to take the burden of all the



poverty caused by rum? I think not. And I think, if they should be called upon to act as missionaries, to go into the houses of their suffering victims, and distribute themselves the bread of life, — to be eye-witnesses of the ruin that comes from their shops, — if one tender spot was left in the heart, the sale could not go on. It goes on now, notwithstanding some prosecutions bringing it occasionally into check. The sale is the great outward temptation of the sin; and many young men are entering its door to keep up the supply of wretchedness.

The intoxicating cup is the fostering parent of the most destructive vices. Gambling, so ruinous, so fascinating, so full of deceit, so generally reprobated, has risen up, and stalked through our midst, during the two past years, with a boldness and retinue absolutely confounding. These two years have been the reign of rum. Where are the gambling-rooms, but in connection with the places where wines and other liquors are sold, or where they may easily be obtained? Is it not the cheering and blinding cup, passed round, that prepares one to be the more ready victim of the expert gamester?

Licentiousness, too, which of late has made rapid strides among us, is excited and emboldened to seductive arts by stimulating drinks. Many a young man has found that the wine-cup has overpowered his virtue. Think of this, ye who encourage him to drink of it! I am called to witness very sad wrecks of female innocence and beauty, — wrecks of health, and wrecks of all loveliness. Few that enter these gates of death



ever return. While I am preparing this report, a young female of nineteen lies on the bed of last suffering, and sends for me. About three years since, she was the victim of seduction; and her seducer still lives. God forgive him! She gave herself up to the worst habits of life. At times, she was perfectly wretched. At one of these times, two years since, I saw her. I could scarcely dissuade her from taking her life. I counselled and prayed with her. After passing through many wearisome days and nights of excruciating pain, as the wages of her iniquity, she draws near her end. She asks my forgiveness for not having taken my words more kindly. She expresses herself as in the greatest agony of body, and that as nothing to the anguish of her mind. She feels as if her sin had been too great to be pardoned. She cries for mercy. She desires prayers. She asks me to lift up the solemn warning of her example to others. She dies, trusting she may have obtained mercy. She dies: the disease of the violated law of chastity has brought her, after what a wretched career! to what a miserable end! Sin is death. The sting of death is sin.

Licentiousness, gambling, and other iniquity, increase, and commit dreadful ravages, hand in hand with the stimulating draught. That which is the cause of most poverty, and the patron of the greatest evils, ought to be kept prominently before the public as such. What shall be done? There should be less insensibility and indifference, more Christian spirit and sentiment, more Christian principle and faith, on this subject; more Christian sympathy with fallen



and falling man, those whose virtue is threatened, and with all who have at heart the saving of brethren. We need less fear of a political revolution if we do our duty, less despondency, less sympathy with those whose gain or appetite fear the moral demand of self-sacrifice. We want a state of the public heart which will sustain whatever measures the highest legislative wisdom may enact for the diminution of temptation. Higher tastes must be cultivated; sources of pleasure, opened above those of appetite. Our youth must be better instructed in the morality that bears upon this sin, and expressly fortified against it. More dependence must be placed on internal strength than the removal of outward solicitation, though that is all-important, as the generations of men are now inwardly weak. Those who have the influence of wealth and fashion may resolve to show their independence and desire to do good by not encouraging or sanctioning the sale and use of that which is poisonous and ruinous. Let each one feel that he has something to do in this cause; let him seek to take the highest stand duty and religion require, and we shall find a way, at last, out of this labyrinth of trouble.

Next to intoxicating drink, in its importance as bearing upon the condition of the poor, is the subject of the sabbath. A good observance of this day, and attendance upon public worship, are of the utmost consequence to the preservation and restoration of character, the elevation of the laboring classes, and the religious training of our neglected and exposed youth. In proportion as the sabbath is not regarded,



an influence cannot be exerted over others for good. There is a disregard of self, and want of respect for others; an absence of principle, a supreme love of pleasure, a daring recklessness; and intemperance and licentiousness have the reins. I find that there is with many an entire disregard of the sabbath, a growing disregard in the minds of many more, who are departing from the strict customs of the country wherein they were educated. I find, that, among other causes, sabbath-labor on corporations tends greatly to increase this evil. I have known repeated instances, in families under my care, where the head of the family has performed work on the holy day in the direct face of the solemn rebuke of conscience, lest there should be a loss of the place whereby the means of life is obtained. My uniform word has been, "If it is against your conscience to work on that day, break not what you consider a command of God." Often the conscience writhes under a profanation of the day, and, after a while, justifies an assent to it by throwing the blame on those who require the labor; or conscience becomes hardened, and man dares to do as he pleases, forsakes the church entirely, and his whole character is changed. A sabbath laborer cannot expect his family to attend church, while his own example makes the temporal of more consequence than the spiritual. He cannot require his children to attend with a word that will be long heeded or to much purpose. Then, there are many who do not labor on the sabbath, some operatives and some not, whose consciences are weak, and are easily



made weaker, particularly by influences from an influential body ; others still, who are galled by the yoke of customs which are good for them, and pant for "liberty as an occasion to the flesh," who make a plea of the example of labor in certain places, as a sanction for whatever they have a mind to do. Beside, the still and holy air of the sabbath disturbed, the spell which awes many into an observance of the day is broken ; and the calls of health, of rest, and of pleasure, press with an urgency that will be obeyed. In various ways, this labor on the sabbath has an effect on the laborer and on the young, in diminishing a regard for the day and attendance on worship, which amounts to an encouragement to evil, and an obstacle in the way of goodness. This I see ; and I could not do justice to my own convictions of duty, did I not express, with an endeavor not to exaggerate, my knowledge of the fact. I cannot but express my utter astonishment that this labor is permitted to go on. If my voice could reach those who have the ordering of this labor, most earnestly would I entreat them, as one jealous of the ordinances of God, and wishing that they might not be hindered in accomplishing their high designs among my poor, weak brethren, to give the subject the serious and candid consideration it deserves. If it is a divine command that the sabbath should not be used for common labor, I believe that obedience to it can injure no human interest, but will advance all human good. God has given to human power capacity and ingenuity to crowd all lawful work into six days.



Another important topic, forced upon me as my mind goes the rounds of the city, is the state of the youth. I have time now to offer only a few brief remarks. Not a few of the young are in the way they should not go. A number of neglected and depraved boys have gone into the depths of wickedness, this past year, it is to be feared never to return, for the want of a place where they could be controlled, and subjected to good influences. Each one of them will be corruption, trouble, and expense to society. It is a common lament, that so many of our children, in exposed situations, fall so readily and early into city sin. What remedy is there for this? It seems to me, that to remove from our midst, to a House of Reformation, the worst boys, — nuisances to particular neighborhoods, leaders of mischief, and teachers of all wickedness, — a great improvement would be manifest. I think, that if our common schools, which are justly our boast, had one important deficiency supplied, — if the universally acknowledged truths of religion and the great principles of morals were every day inculcated, line upon line, precept upon precept, woven into the whole texture of instruction, — we should not find so much juvenile weakness and depravity, fewer broken-hearted mothers, and more glad fathers. Many thoughts suggest themselves; but I cannot dwell.

I have spoken, in previous reports, of the great usefulness of the Lowell Dispensary to the poor. Its usefulness has been somewhat lessened, the last year, by the insinuating and assumed airs of self-styled



doctors who have crowded in here, and who, under the modest profession of perfect knowledge and skill, manage to get the worthy physician set aside, practise deceit, make high charges, and exact every cent. There are physicians in this city who are a nuisance to society, and a curse to the poor. Dr. Curtis, Dr. Mann, and Dr. Dickey, are the present physicians of the Dispensary.

I have continued to act, by invitation, the past year, as agent of the Howard Benevolent Society, which aids only the poor of the highest character, and who shrink from public charity.

An addition has been made to my duties by the acceptance of the appointment, by the city, of myself as religious instructor of the Poor Farm for the coming year. I hold a religious service there every Sunday eve, minister to the sick who desire it, talk with the erring, and officiate at funerals where there is no preference for another clergyman.

In the accomplishment of this work of charity, at the Chapel and through the city, I have been very kindly aided with funds and sympathy from every quarter. The receipts for charitable purposes have been two hundred twenty-eight dollars seventy-six cents, beside one hundred forty-eight dollars from the Merrimack Female Charitable Society, which has been lately put into my hands by the Treasurer of that society, to be used for the benefit of the sick and suffering poor families connected with the mills. The chief sources of the receipts are as follows: From a contribution in the church of the South Con-



gregational Society, thirty-one dollars. From different individuals, fifty-seven dollars. From the Lyceum, fifteen dollars. From the Floral Sale of 1846, after deducting expenses, fifty-four dollars. From a Little Boys' Fair, one dollar fifty cents; from a Young Ladies' Fair, six dollars; from a second, fourteen dollars; from a third, fifty dollars; amounting to seventy-one dollars fifty cents, — the largest gift from any one class of sources, which it gives me the most sincere and lively pleasure to acknowledge. Included in this estimate are several orders upon the stores, which benevolent individuals have allowed me to give within a fixed sum. It does not include gifts of cloth, books, and other articles, and liberal allowances made all over the city, without any distinction of denomination, for almost every thing purchased by me directly for the poor or for the Chapel. These general manifestations of interest and benevolence are very creditable to the heart of the city. I feel grateful to the citizens, and to a smiling Providence. Of the money at our command, about one-third came through our own exertions at self-support, and the encouragement of a willing public, through the Lyceum and Floral Sale. The expenditures have amounted to two hundred forty-six dollars and twenty-two cents; leaving, on the 1st of July, a balance against the Poor's Purse of eighteen dollars. The expenditures of the Poor's Purse have been, almost entirely, for stoves, wood, shoes, sickness, and books for children.

I have now spread before you a view of the history,



operations, receipts, and expenditures of the Ministry at Large in this city another year, with such thoughts and suggestions as it has seemed to me important to express or to repeat. I should be happy to receive any thoughts or suggestions from others, that may lead to sounder opinions, or make me more useful. I have spoken, perhaps, with too much minuteness and fulness; but many are asking for particulars. If I have uttered myself with too much freedom or frankness, set it down, I pray you, to a too-earnest desire to be faithful to convictions of truth, and to do good.

Reviewing the work of the year, taking a lofty position, as by the side of Jesus on the Mount, and casting your eyes over this field of mission, with the spirit of the Master in the bosom, can you regret that you have started this mission of mercy and love, and that it has been so far sustained? According as it may be prosecuted on my part with fidelity, may you and the public continue to me sympathy, the means to do good, and ready smiles! May I not abuse my trust! May I have health and wisdom! And may you not be weary in well doing!

Respectfully submitted,

HORATIO WOOD.

LOWELL, July 11, 1847.

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\* \* This Report was read in the South Congregational Church, and repeated, by invitation, July 18, in St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church.



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